

MAY 15 1961

STATINTL

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(POWERS)

CPYRGHT

POUND, VA.--IMPRISONED U-2 PILOT FRANCIS POWERS HAS EMPHATICALLY  
DENIED SPECULATION HE WOULD REMAIN IN RUSSIA AFTER COMPLETION OF  
HIS 10-YEAR ESPIONAGE SENTENCE.

IN A RECENT LETTER TO HIS PARENTS, MR. AND MRS. OLIVER POWERS,  
HE WROTE, "I DO NOT INTEND TO STAY IN THE SOVIET UNION WHEN I AM  
RELEASED.

"I HAVE NEVER SAID TO ANYONE THAT I INTENDED TO DO SO," HE  
TOLD HIS PARENTS IN THE LETTER WHICH THEY RELEASED YESTERDAY.

A PUBLISHED ACCOUNT LAST MONTH BY A LONDON NEWSPAPER (THE DAILY  
MAIL) SAID THE FORMER U. S. AIR FORCE PILOT CONVICTED LAST SUMMER OF  
MAKING HIGH ALTITUDE FLIGHTS OVER RUSSIA, WOULD STAY IN THE SOVIET  
UNION WHEN HE GAINED HIS FREEDOM.

THE STORY ALSO SAID POWERS' WIFE, MRS. BARBARA POWERS OF  
MILLEDGEVILLE, GA., WOULD JOIN HIM THERE.

BUT FRANCIS ASSURED HIS PARENTS THAT "I WILL RETURN HOME, WHERE  
I BELONG AND WANT TO BE, AS SOON AS I AM RELEASED. REMAINING HERE HAS  
NEVER ENTERED MY MIND."

HIS MOTHER, IN ILL HEALTH FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND JUST DISCHARGED  
FROM A HOSPITAL FRIDAY, TOLD UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL "I HAD ALWAYS  
FELT HE WOULDN'T DELIBERATELY STAY OVER THERE OF HIS OWN FREE WILL."

HIS FATHER, A SHOE REPAIRMAN IN NEARBY NORTON, SAID HE "KNEW ALL  
ALONG THAT IT (THE STORY) WAS ALL RUMORS AND MADE UP."

FRANCIS WROTE HE WAS "PROUD TO BE" A U. S. CITIZEN, ADDING "I  
MIGHT NOT LIKE ALL THE POLICIES OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, BUT I FEEL  
SURE THERE ARE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN THE STATES WHO DISAGREE WITH  
THEM ALSO."

"I WAS BORN AN AMERICAN AND I INTEND TO DIE AN AMERICAN,"  
POWERS WROTE.

5/15--TS1113AED

CPYRGHT